

OUTGOING MESSAGE

Approved For Release 2005/04/21 : CIA-RDP78S01932A000100010043-0

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ITEM NO: 5

DATE: 10 JAN 79

SUBJECT: SOVIETS ASSESS CHINESE POLITICS

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SOVIET SINOLOGIST BORIS ZANEGIN OF THE USA INSTITUTE IN MOSCOW CONCEDED PRIVATELY ON 9 JANUARY THAT THE SWEEPING CHANGES IN REGIONAL MILITARY COMMANDS IN CHINA DEMONSTRATE THE STRENGTH OF THE PEKING GOVERNMENT. ZANEGIN SAID THERE WAS WIDE SPECULATION AMONG SOVIET SPECIALISTS ON THE SHUFFLE, BUT THAT HE AND OTHERS BELIEVE THE CHINESE LEADERSHIP HAS PREVENTED THE MILITARY FROM FORMING A SEPARATE POLITICAL BASE.

SOVIET NEWS MEDIA HAVE NOT ORIGINATED ANY MAJOR COMMENT, BUT HAVE CITED FOREIGN COMMENTARY PORTRAYING THE SHIFTS AS SYMPTOMATIC OF THE SHARPENING STRUGGLE AMONG VARIOUS GROUPS IN THE LEADER-

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SHIP. ZANEGIN'S REMARKS REVEAL THAT THIS COMMENTARY IS PRIMARILY DESIGNED FOR EXTERNAL AUDIENCES--PARTICULARLY IN THE WEST--IN AN EFFORT TO ENCOURAGE CAUTION IN THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARD THE CHINESE LEADERSHIP.

SINCE THE CHINESE TENTH PARTY CONGRESS IN AUGUST THE SOVIETS HAVE ATTACKED THE CHINESE LEADERSHIP IN ORDER WTO SHOW CHOU EN-LAI IN HOT WATER. THE SOVIET ARGUMENT IS, OF COURSE, SELF-SERVING. MOSCOW WOULD ENJOY NOTHING MORE THAN THE DISCREDITING OF CHOU'S POLICIES WHICH HAVE ENDED PEKING'S DIPLOMATIC ISOLATION.

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